

Comment on the proposed precedence of the generic name *Ataenius* Harold, 1867 over *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862 (Insecta, Coleoptera)
(Case 3377; see BZN 64: 39–42)

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I am in full support of the application to give precedence to the generic name *Ataenius* Harold, 1867 over *Aphodinus* Motschulsky, 1862. I write as a specialist of these beetles on a world basis, who has used the name *Ataenius* for many years in several papers and books.

Based on a recently updated list of references concerning *Ataenius*, in the years 1870–2000 over 50 authors in the world have used the name *Ataenius* in over 150 papers, monographs and catalogues. The name *Aphodinus* Motschulsky was used only three times nearly 100 years ago in relation to the genus *Aphodius* Illiger, falling into oblivion even as a subgeneric name of *Aphodius* (these two names differ from each other only by one letter).

The three type specimens of *Aphodinus* are preserved in Motschulsky's collection in Moscow, while over 300 species with thousands of specimens of *Ataenius* are deposited in a large number of museum collections around the world. Changing all the specimen records in these collections would seem to be a pointless task. The taxonomy of *Ataenius* is very complicated (see Stebnicka & Lago, 2005) and an additional nomenclatural burden would make difficulties for students researching *Ataenius* and related genera. Adoption of the name *Aphodinus* would be seriously confusing not only to systematics and museum collections, but also to progressing molecular studies.

In accord with current usage and the maintenance of nomenclatural stability, and to avoid name change and unnecessary confusion, I strongly support the application by Howden & Smetana.

Additional note

The genus *Ataenius* was described by Harold (1867, p. 82) as follows: '*Ataenius* (n.g. Eupariis et Rhyssemis intermedium) *scutellaris*: Affinis *A. strigato* Say . . .'. Therefore, Harold originally indicated *Ataenius scutellaris* as type-species of the genus. In the same year, Harold, (1867, p. 100) added a complete definition of the genus as follows: '*Ataenius* (Nov. Gen.). Caput gibbosum, vertice mutico . . .'.

Additional references

- Harold, E. 1867a. Diagnosen neuer Coprophagen. *Coleopterologische Hefte*, 1: 76–84.
Harold, E. 1867b. Diagnosen neuer Coprophagen. *Coleopterologische Hefte*, 2: 94–100.
Stebnicka, Z.T. & Lago, P.K. 2005. The New World species of *Ataenius* Harold, 1867. V. Revision of the *A. strigatus* group (Scarabaeidae: Aphodiinae: Eupariini). *Insecta Mundi*, 19: 55–83.